AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims of the present application without prejudice or disclaimer as set forth below:

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1-17. (canceled)

18.   (previously presented)   A system comprising:

an integrated management agent capable of managing components

10   of a storage area network (SAN), the integrated management agent

comprising a device agent;

the device agent comprising an object-based device handler sublayer

and a protocol-dependent device handler sublayer, the protocol-dependent

device handler sublayer comprising multiple modules, each respective

15   module of the multiple modules adapted to support a respective device-type-

specific protocol; and

wherein a particular module of the multiple modules that is adapted to

support a particular device-type-specific protocol may be installed to or

uninstalled from the protocol-dependent device handler sublayer

20   independently of other modules of the multiple modules while the integrated

management agent is running.

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19.   (previously presented)   The system of Claim 18, wherein the

integrated management agent further comprises an object manager that

represents the components of the SAN as objects, and wherein the object-

based device handler sublayer provides an interface between the object

5   manager and the protocol-dependent device handler sublayer to permit an

object level interface to the devices.

20.   (previously presented)   The system of Claim 18, wherein the

integrated management agent further comprises a dynamic list of device-

10   type-specific protocols that it is capable of using, wherein each device-type-

specific protocol is associated with a list of objects and methods, and

wherein a given list of objects and methods is added to the dynamic list

when a given module of the multiple modules supporting a given device-

type-specific protocol is installed to the protocol-dependent device handler

15   sublayer.

21.   (new)   The system of Claim 19, wherein the integrated

management agent further comprises a consistent user interface module

coupled to the object manager, wherein at least one device type-specific

20   module is installed, and wherein the at least one device type-specific module

further comprises a device handler for coupling a storage system to the

integrated management agent.

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22.   (new)   The system of claim 21, wherein at least one device type-specific module further comprises code for supporting a plurality of protocols to communicate with a plurality of devices.

5   23.   (new) The system of claim 22, wherein the management system further comprises a distributed error and status handler capable of handling error and status information from at least one device.

24.   (new) The system of Claim 23, wherein at least a first level of the

10   distributed error and status handler executes on the at least one device.

25.   (new) The system of Claim 24, wherein the at least one machine selected from the group comprising a host and an appliance incorporates a second level of error and status handler.

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26.   (new) The system of Claim 24, wherein the distributed error and status handler further comprises a centralized global error and status handler level.

20   27.   (new) The system of Claim 25, wherein the centralized global error and status handler level executes upon a fault tolerant system in a storage are network management environment.

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28.   (new) The system of Claim 18, wherein the integrated management agent further comprises a trap handler coupled to a notification module to receive traps from at least one SAN device and send notification to at least one system administrator.

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29.   (new) The system of Claim 28, wherein the integrated management agent is further capable of sending traps to support at least a second management system.

10   30.   (new) The system of Claim 18, wherein the integrated management agent is capable of being configured with a configuration utility.

31.   (new) The system of Claim 18, wherein the object manager further comprises a dynamic list indicating device types the integrated management

15   agent is capable of handling, wherein installing device type-specific modules causes addition of device types to the dynamic list, and wherein addition of device types to the dynamic list does not require shutting down the integrated management agent.

20   32.   (new) The system of Claim 31, wherein the network interconnection system further comprises at least one fibre channel switch, and wherein a device type-specific module is type specific to the at least one fibre channel switch.

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33.   (new) The system of Claim 18, wherein the integrated management system further comprises a firmware download module with unified user interface hiding device specific firmware download process and characteristics from the administrator.

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34.   (new) The system of Claim 18, wherein the integrated management agent is capable of discovering devices and agents in the SAN and their interconnection by applying a conglomerate method comprising at least two elements selected from the group comprising host and device agent

10   broadcasting, multicasting device identity, collecting addresses from network traffic, collecting information from a name server, scanning a set of ranges of address supplied in configuration information, and collecting information about devices from configuration information.

15   35.   (new)   The system of Claim 18, wherein the integrated management agent is further capable of discovering devices and agents in the SAN and their interconnection by applying a conglomerate method comprising at least three elements selected from the group comprising host and device agent broadcasting, multicasting device identity, collecting

20   addresses from network traffic, collecting information from a name server, scanning a set of ranges of address supplied in configuration information, and collecting information about devices from configuration information.

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